

March 9, 2015

To the Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Ned Ellis from Hebron, CT. I operate Mapleleaf Farm which has 250 milking cows and 250 replacement heifers. We grow as much of our feed as possible to reduce purchased feed costs. Mapleleaf Farm grows 300 acres of corn and 150 of hay, with acres being rented.

Governor Malloy has called for sweeping unspent funds from the Community Investment Act (CIA) and diverting all future funds (January 2016 - January 2017) to the general fund.

This will be devastating to CT Agriculture. The CIA has provided a safety net to our dairy farmers when 80% of the cost of production was greater than our pay price. In 2009 the CIA saved scores of dairy farms adjusting for lost income. The price we receive for our milk is volatile and we have little control over what we are paid regardless of production costs. The same scenario is happening in 2015.

We have 450 acres of land preserved in the Farmland Preservation Act. We have cleared and drained as much of this protected land as possible to ensure cropland for our future and the future of those that wish to farm after us.

Agriculture and all its infrastructure generates 1 Billion dollars for our state coffers along with providing open space for our residents to enjoy. To not see the value of this is very shortsighted. We do have a younger generation that wants to continue farming.

The CIA serves as a model for the rest of the New England states. Let's not short change ourselves in the immediate future for something that will benefit Connecticut for generations to come. ***Please leave the CIA intact!***

Respectfully Submitted,

Ned Ellis

Mapleleaf Farm
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